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Diana T Fritz 12/06/2006 04:37:08 PM From DB/Inbox: Diana T Fritz

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Text:

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 04382

SIPDIS  
CXABU:

ACTION: AMB  
INFO: P/M POL DCM ECON

DISSEMINATION: AMB  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MJSISON  
DRAFTED: AMB:MJSISON  
CLEARED: NONE

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7775  
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0716  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0541  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0834  
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 6672

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 004382

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [AE](#) [SY](#)  
SUBJECT: VISIT OF THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT TO THE UAE

REF: SECSTATE 193041 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Ambassador spoke with Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan (AbZ) November 29 evening to relay USG concern regarding news of a planned visit by Syrian President Bashar al Assad to the UAE. With reference to Minister of State al Sha,ali's comments the day before on a possible AbZ visit to Damascus, Ambassador also urged that AbZ not travel to Syria. It was important to avoid sending the message that Syria's misbehavior would be rewarded with enhanced engagement by a major Gulf player, she emphasized.

¶2. (S) AbZ acknowledged that the Syrians might spin a Bashar visit to Abu Dhabi as a diplomatic "win." He noted that Bashar's travel had been postponed several times. A date had not yet been set, although there had been discussion of a possible December timeframe. Ambassador outlined the possibility of such a visit undermining the government of PM Siniora at a time when it was under intense pressure by Syria and proxies. AbZ stated that the UAE leadership would take into account the situation on the ground in Lebanon when discussing a possible Syrian visit. Ambassador highlighted again the need to avoid emboldening the Syrian regime and the likely possibility that an AbZ visit to Damascus would be exploited by the SARG. She reminded the Foreign Minister that although Bashar had promised a "low profile" visit when AbZ traveled to Damascus in July 2005, the SARG had ensured full media coverage of the event.

¶3. (S) Embassy recommends that senior level USG interlocutors echo these concerns with AbZ on the margins of November 30 Forum for the Future sessions in Jordan as well as at the upcoming December 8-9 IISS meetings in Manama.

